

where. I got on to it, and went lookin' about for land in that neighborhood. I could get nothin' at a bargain but a big piece of swamp, but I took it fast enough and held on to it. What turned out was just what I counted on. They couldn't make the park complete without Plunkitt's swamp, and they had to pay a good price for it. Anything dishonest in that?

Up in the watershed I made some money, too. I bought up several bits of land there some years ago and made a pretty good guess that they would be bought up for water purposes later by the city.

Somehow I always guessed about right, and shouldn't enjoy the profit of my foresight? It was rather amusin' when the condemnation commissioners came along and found pieces of the land in the name of George Plunkitt of the Fifteenth Assembly District, New York City. They wondered how I knew just what to buy. The answer is, I saw my opportunity and I took it. . . .

I've told you how I got rich by honest graft. Now, let me tell you that most politicians who are accused of robbin' the city get rich the same way. They didn't steal a dollar from the city treasury. They just seen their opportunities and took them. That is why, when a reform administration comes in and spends a half-million dollars in tryin' to find the public robberies they talked about in the campaign, they don't find them.

The books are always all right. The money in the city treasury is all right. Everything is all right. All they can show is that the Tammany heads of departments looked after their friends, within the law, and gave them what opportunities they could to make honest graft. Now, let me tell you, that's never goin' to hurt Tammany with the people. Every good man looks after his friends, and any man who doesn't isn't likely to be popular. If I have a good thing to hand out in private life, I give it to a friend. Why shouldn't I do the same in public life?

Another kind of honest graft: Tammany has raised a good many salaries. There was an awful howl by the reformers, but don't you know that Tammany gains ten votes for every one it lost by salary raisin'? The Wall Street banker thinks it's a shameful to raise a department clerk's salary from \$1,500 to \$1,800 a year, but every man who draws a salary himself says, "That's all right. I wish it was me." And he feels very much like votin' the Tammany ticket on election day, just out of sympathy.

Tammany was beat in 1901 because the people were deceived into believin' that it worked dishonest graft. They didn't draw a distinction between dishonest and honest graft, but they saw that some Tammany men grew rich and supposed they had been robbin' the city treasury or leavin' blackmail on disorderly houses, or workin' in with the gamblers and lawbreakers. As a matter of policy, if nothing else, why should the Tammany leaders go into such

dirty business when there is so much honest graft lyin' around? They are in power? Did you ever consider that?

Now, in conclusion, I want to say that I don't know a dishonest dollar. If my worst enemy was given the job of writin' my epitaph when I'm gone, he couldn't do more than write:

"George W. Plunkitt: He Seen His Opportunity and He Took 'Em."

Plunkitt's speech, far from endangering his position or reputation, served only to heighten his influence and appeal. He died in 1924 at the age of eighty-two, an esteemed and very wealthy man.

### President Theodore Roosevelt Condemns the "Muckrakers" Who Smear and Slander Honest Men.

One week after President William McKinley was fatally wounded by an assassin on September 6, 1901, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt became, at age forty-two, America's youngest commander in chief. In one of his first actions as president, Roosevelt launched an aggressive anti-corruption campaign, particularly against the nation's most powerful industries and corporate monopolies. Wildly popular with the general public, Roosevelt's "house cleaning" crusade exposed a seemingly endless parade of unscrupulous officials and leaders in both government and the private sector. But there was one unintended result—in the frenzy to root out the bad, many honest men were publicly smeared by rumors and unfounded charges. In an impassioned speech he gave on April 14, 1906, Roosevelt reiterated his desire to combat fraud, but also railed against those who fabricated stories and dug up dirt—"muckrakers," as he called them—merely to sell newspapers or ruin enemies.

In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, you may recall the description of the man with the muck rake, the man who could look no way but downward, with the muck rake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck rake, but would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake to himself the filth of the floor.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, the man with the muck rake is set forth as the example of him whose vision is fixed on carnal instead of spiritual things. Yet he also typifies the man who in this life consistently refuses to see aught that is lofty, and fixes his eyes with solemn intentness only on that which is vile and debasing. Now it is very necessary that we should not flinch from seeing what is vile and debasing. There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with the muck rake; and there are times and places where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed. But the man who

never does anything else, who never thinks or speaks or writes save of his feats with the muck rake, speedily becomes not a help to society, not an incitement to good, but one of the most potent forces for evil.

There are in the body politic, economic and social, many and grave evils, and there is urgent necessity for the sternest war upon them. There should be relentless exposure of, and attack upon, every evil man, whether politician or business man, every evil practice, whether in politics, in business, or in social life. I hail as a benefactor every writer or speaker, every man, who on the platform or in a book, magazine, or newspaper, with merciless severity makes such attack, provided always that he in his turn remembers that the attack is of use only if it is absolutely truthful. The liar is no whit better than the thief, and if his mendacity takes the form of slander, he may be worse than most thieves. It puts a premium upon knavery untruthfully to attack an honest man, or even with hysterical exaggeration to assail a bad man with untruth. An epidemic of indiscriminate assault upon character does no good, but very great harm. The soul of every scoundrel is gladdened whenever an honest man is assailed, or when a scoundrel is untruthfully assailed. . . .

Now, it is easy to twist out of shape what I have just said, easy to affect to misunderstand it, and if it is slurred over in repetition not difficult really to misunderstand it. Some persons are sincerely incapable of understanding that to denounce mudslinging does not mean the endorsement of whitewashing; and both the interested individuals who need whitewashing and those others who practice mudslinging like to encourage such confusion of ideas. . . .

At the risk of repetition, let me say again that my plea is not for immunity to, but for the most unsparing exposure of, the politician who betrays his trust, of the big business man who makes or spends his fortune in illegitimate or corrupt ways. There should be a resolute effort to hunt every such man out of the position he has disgraced. Expose the crime and hunt down the criminal, but remember that even in the case of crime, if it is attacked in sensational, lurid, and untruthful fashion, the attack may do more damage to the public mind than the crime itself.

It is because I feel that there should be no rest in the endless war against the forces of evil that I ask the war be conducted with sanity as well as with resolution. The men with the muck rakes are often indispensable to the well-being of society—but only if they know when to stop raking the muck, and to look upward to the celestial crown above them, to the crown of worthy endeavor. There are beautiful things above and round about them, and if they gradually grow to feel that the whole world is nothing but muck, their power of usefulness is gone. . . .

At this moment we are passing through a period of great unrest—social, political, and industrial unrest. It is of the utmost importance for our future

that this should prove to be not the unrest of mere rebelliousness against life, of mere dissatisfaction with the inevitable inequality of conditions, but the unrest of a resolute and eager ambition to secure the betterment of the individual and the nation. . . .

It is a prime necessity that if the present unrest is to result in permanent good, the emotion shall be translated into action, and that the action shall be marked by honesty, sanity, and self-restraint. There is mighty little good in a mere spasm of reform. The reform that counts is that which comes through steady, continuous growth. Violent emotionalism leads to exhaustion.

It is important to this people to grapple with the problems connected with the amassing of enormous fortunes and the use of those fortunes, both corporate and individual, in business. We should discriminate in the sharpest way between fortunes well won and fortunes ill won; between those gained as an incident to performing great services to the community as a whole and those gained in evil fashion by keeping just within the limits of mere law honesty. Of course, no amount of charity in spending such fortunes in any way compensates for misconduct in making them. . . .

The men of wealth who today are trying to prevent the regulation and control of their business in the interest of the public by the proper government authorities will not succeed, in my judgment, in checking the progress of the movement. But if they did succeed, they would find that they had sown the wind and would surely reap the whirlwind, for they would ultimately provoke the violent excesses which accompany a reform coming by convulsion instead of by steady and natural growth.

On the other hand, the wild preachers of unrest and discontent, the wild agitators against the entire existing order, the men who act crookedly, whether because of sinister design or from mere puzzle-headedness, the men who preach destruction without proposing any substitute for what they intend to destroy, or who propose a substitute which would be far worse than the existing evils—all these men are the most dangerous opponents of real reform. If they get their way, they will lead the people into a deeper pit than any into which they could fall under the present system. If they fail to get their way, they will still do incalculable harm by provoking the kind of reaction which in its revolt against the senseless evil of their teaching would enthrone more securely than ever the evils which their misguided followers believe they are attacking.

More important than aught else is the development of the broadest sympathy of man for man. The welfare of the wage worker, the welfare of the tiller of the soil—upon these depend the welfare of the entire country. Their good is not to be sought in pulling down others, but their good must be the prime object of all our statesmanship.

Materially we must strive to secure a broader economic opportunity for all men, so that each shall have a better chance to show the stuff of which he is made. Spiritually and ethically we must strive to bring about clean living and right thinking. We appreciate that the things of the body are important, but we appreciate also that the things of the soul are immeasurably more important.

The foundation stone of national life is, and ever must be, the high individual character of the average citizen.

### ***The Reverend Dr. Donald Sage Mackay Addresses the Question "Does God Care?" After an Earthquake Destroys San Francisco.***

"San Francisco is gone!" exclaimed the writer Jack London after an earthquake leveled much of his native city on April 18, 1906. "Nothing remains of it but memories and a fringe of dwelling houses on the outskirts." Fires raged for days and one-third of San Francisco was ultimately reduced to ash and rubble. Approximately 800 people were killed—although some estimates put the number of deaths in the thousands—and more than 200,000 citizens were left homeless. On the Sunday after the quake, the Reverend Dr. Donald Sage Mackay of the Collegiate Church in New York City, like many of his fellow clergy, struggled to explain such overwhelming suffering and disaster in spiritual and religious terms.

"Does God care?" is doubtless the question which many people are asking in these days of national calamity. It was different when two weeks ago the lava of Vesuvius engulfed hundreds of our fellow beings in a distant land, but today, when flaming fingers have written ruin and death over one of the fairest cities of our own land, the religious question becomes insistent. In the words of Eliphaz to Job, "It toucheth thee and thou art troubled." And from many pulpits today trite and wholesome lessons will be drawn defending the spirit of Providence and commending to the hearts of the faithful a proper spirit of humility. And yet, as Job replied to his comforters of old, "The thunders of the Almighty, who can understand?" His ways are past finding out.

It is not the function of the Christian pulpit to justify, far less defend, the dealings of the Almighty. The calamity of San Francisco has a profound religious significance, but that significance is not to be discovered by human ingenuity scrutinizing the methods of divine judgment. In itself, in all its appalling horrors, the catastrophe, which in a few hours wiped out the pride and glory of a modern city, staggers the mind. It is an impressive picture of the awful resources of natural law working out in periodic course their appointed destiny. That we cannot explain, but we can give to this calamity a profound religious significance by recognizing in it an opportunity, not for

vindicating God, but for helping men. God does care for his children, and that love of His is not limited by death. It is for us who believe in that love to mediate its power through the channels of human sympathy and human brotherhood. We make this disaster beautiful in light of our Christian charity.

Ashes make a good fertilizer, and out of the ashes and ruin of San Francisco will grow—not only a stately city of stone, but, as we believe, a worthier city of good citizenship, stirred to independence and self-control, while also realizing the blessings of helpfulness and comradeship in this hour of its direct distress.

### ***W. E. B. Du Bois Issues a Call to Arms to His Fellow African Americans in the "Battle for Humanity"***

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### ***Booker T. Washington Warns Against Confrontational Actions That May Do More Harm than Good.***

Booker T. Washington's address at the 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition offering a course for reconciliation between blacks and whites electrified his audience and won him national acclaim. Washington's central message to blacks was not to dwell on past (or even present) grievances but to focus on economic security through discipline and hard work, no matter how menial. W. E. B. Du Bois, a twenty-seven-year-old African American educator, was impressed with the speech. "Here," Du Bois remarked, "might be the basis of a real settlement between whites and blacks." But Du Bois's admiration for Washington was short lived, and as Du Bois himself gained national prominence as a writer and lecturer, a rivalry between the two black leaders emerged and became increasingly acrimonious. Du Bois was particularly incensed by Washington's suggestion that blacks should exercise "patience, forbearance, and self-control" when faced with racial injustice. As a rebuke to Washington and his followers, Du Bois formed the Niagara Movement—named after the site of their first meeting in 1905 near Niagara Falls in Canada (New York State hotels would not offer rooms to blacks). At their August 1906 meeting, held in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in honor of John Brown, Du Bois gave the following speech articulating the movement's goals and philosophy.

\* On October 16, 1859—less than two years before the beginning of the Civil War—a white abolitionist named John Brown led a group of eighteen men (five black, thirteen white) on a raid at Harpers Ferry to steal munitions from the town's armory and rally the slaves. Pursued by a young lieutenant named Robert E. Lee, ten of Brown's followers, including two of his sons, were killed and the rest were captured and sentenced to death. Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859.